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ANSWERS
OF
THE COMMITTEE
OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**"THE PRESIDENT, DIRECTORS AND COMPANY FOR ERECTING
A PERMANENT BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER SCHUYLKILL
AT OR NEAR THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,"**

TO
THE QUESTIONS

PROPOUNDED BY
THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCILS

APPOINTED
TO INQUIRE INTO THE EXPEDIENCY OF MAKING THE SCHUYL-
KILL PERMANENT BRIDGE

A FREE BRIDGE.

Philadelphia, March, 1833.

*** The perusal of the following Paper is earnestly
recommended to every Citizen of the City of
Philadelphia.*

ANSWERS

TO THE QUESTIONS PROPOUNDED BY
THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCILS,

&c., &c.

The Committee of the Board of Directors of “The President, Directors and Company for erecting a Permanent Bridge over the River Schuylkill at or near the City of Philadelphia,” having considered the Questions propounded to them by the Joint Committee of Councils, respectfully return the following answers.

1st. As to the construction placed by the Company on the 10th Section of their act of incorporation, passed the 16th of March 1798, so far as relates to the power of the State to make their bridge a “*free bridge.*”—

The only part of this Section, which is applicable to the present occasion, is as follows: “And if the said fund shall not be adequate to the purpose last mentioned, the Legislature may, at the expiration of the said twenty-five years, *declare it a ‘FREE bridge,’ (providing at the same time the means of keeping it in repair,*) and the company shall be obliged to take such sum of money therefor, as shall be allowed on a fair appraisement by indifferent persons.”

The twenty-five years having elapsed, the Legislature have the power to declare it *a free bridge*, providing at the same time the means of keeping it in repair, and providing also for the payment of such sum of money as shall be allowed for the said bridge, on a fair appraisement by indifferent persons; that is, we suppose, by disinterested persons mutually selected by the parties.

All these acts are to be cotemporaneous, and the effect produced would be to make the Permanent Bridge at Market Street a "*free bridge*," on which no toll could be levied, even for the purpose of keeping it in repair, which must be provided for from some other source.

The right to have it a *free bridge*, if taken by the Commonwealth under this Section, is one shared by all the citizens of the State, and formed a part of the original consideration on which this charter was granted, and cannot be impaired by any subsequent legislative act.

If, therefore, the Legislature deem it expedient to use this part of the 10th Section, they must make it a *free bridge*, that is, one on which *no toll*, however small, can be exacted. They must pay its value—and they must provide a fund or means for keeping it in repair.

The events contemplated by the other parts of the 10th Section, having never happened, it is unnecessary to consider what would have been the construction to be put upon them. They have no connexion with this clause, which is the only one under consideration.

2d. As to the value of the bridge.

There may be different modes adopted by different persons, in ascertaining the present value of this bridge; but the Committee are of opinion, that, as there has been no depreciation in its value since its erection, the original cost of the structure, and site which was purchased from the City in the year 1800, would be the fairest criterion—

| | |
|--|------------|
| And this would give the sum of | \$ 300,000 |
| The present amount of stock is | 195,650 |
| The difference between that and the actual cost of the bridge is | 104,350 |
| Whole cost, | \$ 300,000 |

This difference was raised by loan, on a pledge of the property of the Company, and has been paid, as will be perceived by a reference to the list of dividends, by applying the whole of the income of the Company for several years, to its redemption.

Supposing then that the market value of the stock is taken as a criterion.—This is from 135 to 137½ for \$100 paid, and at 135 would give \$ 264,127 50

Or if the nett tolls were to be adopted, calculating interest at 6 per cent., and supposing them to be \$ 16,000, they would give \$ 266,666 66
3d. Present rate of tolls.

The tolls, as will be perceived by the accompanying rates of toll, are the same as originally fixed by law, and are lower than those of any other bridge in the United States.

In order to protect the country people, only “*three fourths*” of the toll demandable in other cases, can be taken for the transportation of “the produce of the country,” and for those laden with manure, *half toll*—and empty carriages of burthen pass for *half toll*.

4th. Such annual expenses for lighting, watching, superintendence and repairs, &c., as would fall on the State, if taken for a free bridge.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Two watchmen's salaries and gratuities, | \$ 640 00 |
| One superintendent at least, | 500 00 |
| Lighting, say oil, | 232 10 |
| Repairs, taken from an average of four years, viz. | |
| 1829, 1830, 1831, and 1832, | 3608 21 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total, | \$ 4980 31 |
| | <hr/> |

Two watchmen would be necessary ; for the two collectors and watchman at present, make together, three ; and a capable superintendent to examine the structure almost daily, and superintend the necessary repairs, &c., could not be obtained for the sum above stated.

5th. The amount of tolls received, and by whom paid.

The average of gross tolls received for four years, viz. 1829, 1830, 1831, and 1832, is \$ 20,435,13

Of this amount, as far as can be ascertained, about four-fifths or five-sixths are paid by country people, and the residue by citizens of Philadelphia and the adjoining districts,

Leaving the present sum, thus raised annually from

Philadelphia and its immediate vicinity, only \$ 4,087,02

Or, \$ 3,405,85

6th. The dividends made by the Company.

In the year 1800, the Company purchased the present site of the bridge, consisting of the width of Market street on each side of the river Schuylkill, with all the rights belonging to the City of Philadelphia appertaining thereto, and for this they have paid the sum of \$ 40,000.

The bridge itself was commenced in 1803, and was finished and opened in 1805.

From the accompanying list of dividends made from 1805 to 1832 inclusive, it will be perceived, that from 1805 to 1812, both inclusive—eight years—only two dividends, $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. were declared, and that during the whole period of twenty-eight years, they have received but five dollars nineteen cents on their capital stock of \$ 195,650 ; and if the preceding years, from 1800 to 1805, when all the expenditures were made, are added, it will decrease the rate of interest received on the original investment still more. The present rate of dividend is eight per cent., and it requires all the resources of the Company to continue it at that rate.

7th. The contingent or reserved fund.

This, at its par value, amounts to \$ 22,850, and was reserved from the dividends in order to meet any sudden contingency, such as fire or flood, by which the bridge might be suddenly injured or destroyed. It, of course, belongs to the stockholders, who have a right to call for it in the shape of dividend at any moment.

8th. Present number of stockholders.

The present number of stockholders is 235—of whom 99 are widows, single women, orphans, and charitable institutions.

The Committee, having thus answered the questions put to them, beg leave to subjoin a few observations.

From the above information it is evident, that it will require, to make this a free bridge:—

1st. To pay for it the sum of - - - - \$ 300,000

2d. To provide for keeping it in repair, say \$ 5,000

per annum, equal to a capital of - - - 100,000

3d. In case of any sudden accident by fire or flood, to rebuild it—and if this be only putting up the superstructure, will add from \$30,000 to - - 50,000

TO PAY THIS MONEY, OR EVEN TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS IT, IT IS CERTAIN THAT THE STATE WILL NOT AGREE; FOR IT IS NOT THEIR INTEREST TO RAISE BY TAX FROM THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, THAT WHICH IS NOW PAID IN THE SHAPE OF TOLLS BY THOSE WHO USE THE BRIDGE AND ARE BENEFITED BY IT.

IF SUCH A RULE WERE ADOPTED, THE PRINCIPLE WOULD EXTEND TO ALL THE WORKS OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT OWNED BY THE STATE, WHICH WOULD THUS BE MADE TOLL FREE AT THE EXPENSE OF ALL THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

A tax by tolls has always been considered the most equitable form of taxation, as none contribute towards the support of the improvement except those who have the actual use of it.

If this be the case, then the payment of this large amount must fall on the City of Philadelphia, whose interest it cannot be to raise and pay it, and thus create a direct tax to the whole amount on all her citizens, instead of *those of them* who now use the bridge, contributing less than one-fifth or one-sixth towards its support annually.

If the City should however deem it expedient to entertain such a project, there are other views which may be presented for their consideration.

1st. The addition to the City Debt.—

| | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|
| On the 1st of March 1830, the debt was | - | \$1,974,000 00 |
| Deduct Sinking Fund, | - - - - | 383,266 68 |
| Real debt then | - - - - - | <u>\$1,590,733 32</u> |
| On the 8th of March 1832, the debt was | | \$1,965,600 00 |
| Deduct Sinking Fund, | - - - - | 330,031 56 |
| | | <u>\$1,635,568 44</u> |
| Deduct nett debt before, | - - - - | 1,590,733 32 |
| | | <u>\$44,835 12</u> |
| Showing an actual increase of | - - - - | |
| Add loans since made | - \$ 30,000 00 | |
| | 100,000 00 | |
| | <u></u> | <u>130,000 00</u> |
| Carried forward, | | <u>\$174,835 12</u> |

| | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| | Brought forward, | \$174,835 12 |
| Deduct increase of Sinking Fund to 1st January 1833, inclusive, | - - - - - | 46,668 89 |
| Showing an actual increase of debt, since 1st March 1830, of | - - - - - | \$128,166 23 |
| Although several heavy loans had been paid off during that period. | | |
| Add, say cost of bridge, | - - - - - | 300,000 00 |
| | | <u>\$428,166 23</u> |
| With debt 1st March 1830, | - - - - - | 1,590,733 32 |
| And it would make a nett debt of | - - - - - | <u>\$2,018,899 55</u> |

2d. The present state of our Taxes.—

To meet any additional debt, taxes at least to pay the interest of it, must be laid.

The taxes in 1829, were, in the 100 dollars.

City 86 cents.

Poor 22 cents.

County 30 cents.

Making \$1 38 in the 100 dollars.

In 1832, the taxes were:

City - - 85 cents.

Poor - - 34 cents.

County and State 60 cents.

Making \$1 79 in the 100 dollars.

Showing an increase of 41 cents in the 100 dollars in three years.

All these taxes are raised out of real estate, and if they are not diminished, must inevitably decrease its value.

The opening of new streets and roads, the building of the new County Prison, of the new Alms House, the support of the House of Refuge, and the increasing wants of the State, forbid the hope that any diminution can be effected in the Poor, County, and State taxes; and if large additions are made to the City debt, the burden of City taxation will be increased, and the only

source to which the citizens can look for relief from this oppression will be dried up.

There are other views which the Committee might press, but they will only mention some of them, leaving them for the more deliberate consideration of the Committee of Councils.

If this were a *free bridge*, would it be as well taken care of by the public, as when the property of a private company, deeply interested in its welfare?

If destroyed by fire, flood, or other accident, would it ever be rebuilt? The Legislature may not be bound to rebuild it, and they may not grant the right to any one else.

The State has an interest in the Rail Road Bridge at Peters's Island, others have an interest in the wharf property above the Permanent Bridge—may not these interests be strong enough to prevent its re-erection?

If so, then the very object of the City in attempting to make this a free bridge, would be entirely defeated, and her best interests vitally injured, by the destruction of the only direct access to her from the west side of the Schuylkill.

Under any aspect, the Committee of the Bridge Company, who, as citizens of Philadelphia, are deeply interested in its prosperity, cannot perceive that the project of making the Market Street Bridge a free bridge will benefit the City, although it may add some value to property on the west side of the Schuylkill, situated beyond her bounds, and not contributing to City taxation or City support.

JOHN READ,
JAMES C. FISHER,
THOMAS ASTLEY,
J. J. VANDERKEMP,

*Committee of the
Permanent Bridge Company.*

DIVIDENDS

Made on the Stock of the Schuylkill Permanent Bridge Company, from the period of its completion, in the year 1805, up to the present time, 1833.

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|--------------|------------------|-------|-------------|
| Year | 1805, | None. | Brought forward, | 52½ | |
| Year | 1806, | None. | July | 1821, | 3 per cent. |
| Year | 1807, | None. | January | 1822, | 4 do. |
| January | 1808, | 1½ per cent. | July | 1822, | 4 do. |
| January | 1809, | 4 do. | January | 1823, | 4½ do. |
| Year | 1810, | None. | July | 1823, | 3½ do. |
| Year | 1811, | None. | January | 1824, | 3½ do. |
| Year | 1812, | None. | July | 1824, | 3½ do. |
| January | 1813, | 2 per cent. | January | 1825, | 3 do. |
| July | 1813, | 3 do. | July | 1825, | 4 do. |
| January | 1814, | 3 do. | January | 1826, | 4 do. |
| July | 1814, | 3 do. | July | 1826, | 4 do. |
| January | 1815, | 3 do. | January | 1827, | 4 do. |
| July | 1815, | 3 do. | July | 1827, | 4 do. |
| January | 1816, | 3 do. | January | 1828, | 4 do. |
| July | 1816, | 3 do. | July | 1828, | 4 do. |
| January | 1817, | 3 do. | January | 1829, | 4 do. |
| July | 1817, | 3 do. | July | 1829, | 4 do. |
| January | 1818, | 3 do. | January | 1830, | 4 do. |
| July | 1818, | 3 do. | July | 1830, | 4 do. |
| January | 1819, | 3 do. | January | 1831, | 4 do. |
| July | 1819, | None. | July | 1831, | 4 do. |
| January | 1820, | 3 per cent. | January | 1832, | 4 do. |
| July | 1820, | 3 do. | July | 1832, | 4 do. |
| January | 1821, | 3 do. | January | 1833, | 4 do. |
| <hr/> | | | <hr/> | | |
| Carried forward, | 52½ | | In 28 years | 145½ | per cent. |

Or, $5\frac{19}{100}$ ths per cent. per annum.

Philadelphia, January, 1833.

RATES OF TOLL,*According to Law, at the Schuylkill Permanent Bridge.*

| For every | Cents. |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Foot passenger, - - - - - | 1 |
| 2. Horse or mule, without rider or harness, (<i>halter excepted</i>) - - - - - | 1 |
| 3. The same, with rider, - - - - - | 2 |
| 4. Head of horned cattle, not more than 20 to pass at one time, - - - - - | 1 |
| 5. Living sheep, swine, or calf, - - - - - | $\frac{1}{2}$ |

Carriages of Pleasure.

| | Cents. |
|--|--------|
| 6. Four wheels, drawn by four horses, - - - - - | 20 |
| Additional horse, each, - - - - - | 4 |
| 7. The same, drawn by two horses, - - - - - | 12 |
| 8. The same, drawn by one horse, - - - - - | 10 |
| 9. Two wheels, or sleigh, with two horses, - - - - - | 10 |
| Additional horse, - - - - - | 4 |
| 10. The same, with one horse, - - - - - | 6 |

Carriages of Burden.

| | Cents. |
|---|------------------|
| 11. Four wheels, drawn by four horses, loaded, - - - - - | 17 |
| Additional horse, each, - - - - - | 4 |
| Add, to the additional horses, | |
| If 3 tons, or above 2 tons, - - - - - | 5 |
| 4 tons, or above 3, - - - - - | 15 |
| 5 tons, or above 4, - - - - - | 45 |
| 6 tons, or above 5, being the heaviest weight allowed to pass, - - - - - | 135 |
| 12. The same, with produce of the country, wood and stone excepted, - - - - - | 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Additional horse, each, - - - - - | 3 |
| 13. The same, with manure or empty, - - - - - | 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Additional horse, - - - - - | 2 |
| 14. Four wheels, drawn by three horses, loaded, - - - - - | 14 |
| 15. The same, with produce, except wood and stone, - - - - - | 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 16. The same, with manure or empty, - - - - - | 7 |
| 17. Four wheels, drawn by two horses, loaded, - - - - - | 12 |

| | Cents. |
|---|--------|
| 18. The same, with produce, except, &c. - - - | 9 |
| 19. The same, with manure or empty, - - - | 6 |
| 20. Two wheels, or sled, drawn by two horses, loaded, - | 10 |
| Additional horse, each, - - - | 4 |
| 21. The same, with produce, except, &c. - - - | 7½ |
| Additional horse, - - - | 3 |
| 22. The same, with manure or empty, - - - | 5 |
| Additional horse, - - - | 2 |
| 23. Two wheels, or sled, drawn by one horse, loaded, - | 6 |
| 24. The same, with produce, except, &c. - - - | 4½ |
| 25. The same, with manure or empty, - - - | 3 |
| 26. Oxen in draught, 2 estimated as equal to 1 horse. | |
| Sleds of heavy burden, to be estimated as four wheel carriages of like burden. | |
| Dearborne with one horse, - - - | 6¼ |

Rules, according to Law.

Persons, carriages, or cattle, of whatsoever description, *passing over the bridge*, will *keep to the right*. Offence against this rule, by obstructing the passage, will subject the *drivers of carriages to back out*, and *drivers of cattle to return*, and enter on the proper direction, under penalty of thirty dollars.

Carriages of heavy burden shall pay as loaded, which contain any thing more than feed for two days' journey.

Carriages of light burden shall pay as loaded, if not wholly empty.

Loading, if not wholly produce, is not entitled to diminution of toll. Loads of any description whatsoever, exceeding two ton, their weight shall be truly declared by the driver, previous to passing.

Injury done to any part whatsoever, of the property of the Bridge Company, will subject the offender to forfeiture and payment of thirty dollars, and of being liable to damages for further torts. Evasion of tolls is injury of property.

Published by order of the Board of Directors.

GEORGE RUNDLE, *Treasurer.*

Philadelphia, March 6, 1828.